

What is claimed is:

1. An illuminated key blank, comprising:
  - a main body having a blade and a head integral with said blade as a single piece;
  - a cutout formed in said head;
  - a battery disposed in said cutout;
  - a light source selectively electrically connectable to said battery via a selectively connectable lead; and
  - a casing sealed around said head and said battery,
  - wherein said casing holds said light source in place so as to shine light substantially in the direction of said blade.
2. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 1, wherein said casing is permanently sealed around said head.
3. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 1, wherein said main body comprises a conventional pre-made blank key with said cutout formed via one of cutting or punching.
4. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 1, wherein said casing is made from colored plastic.
5. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 4, wherein said light source shines light that is substantially the same color as said casing.

6. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 4, wherein said light source shines light that is of a contrasting color as the color of said casing.
7. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 1, wherein said light source comprises an LED having leads.
8. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 1, wherein said head is substantially U-shaped and said battery is disposed in said cutout between the arms of the U.
9. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 1, wherein said casing substantially conforms to the profile of said head.
10. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 9, wherein said casing does not substantially increase the overall profile of said head.
11. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 1, said casing comprising an upper housing and a lower housing matingly secured together around said head.
12. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 11, at least one of said upper and lower housings further comprising a recess shaped to receive said head.
13. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 11, wherein said head is substantially U-shaped and said battery is disposed in said cutout between the arms of the U.

14. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 13, said upper and lower housings each having a substantially U-shaped recess to receive said head.

15. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 13, further comprising:

a first substantially U-shaped recess formed in said upper housing adapted to receive said head;

a second recess formed in said upper housing within said first substantially U-shaped recess;

a hole formed in said upper housing within said second recess;

a third substantially U-shaped recess formed in said lower housing adapted to receive said head; and

a fourth recess formed in said lower housing within said third substantially U-shaped recess adapted to receive said battery,

wherein said first and third substantially U-shaped recesses matingly correspond when said upper and lower housings are sealed together.

16. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 15, further comprising an actuator disposed in said second recess and accessible from outside said casing via said hole.

17. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 11, each of said upper and lower housings further comprising a recess shaped to receive and retain said light source.

18. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 11, further comprising:

a first recess formed in said upper housing shaped to receive and retain said light source;  
a second recess formed in said lower housing shaped to receive and retain said light source,  
wherein said first and second recesses matingly correspond when said upper and lower housings are sealed together.

19. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 18, said light source having a second lead in contact with said battery, said illuminated key blank further comprising:

a first channel formed in said upper housing adapted to receive one of said leads of said light source; and

a second channel formed in said lower housing adapted to receive the other of said leads of said light source.

20. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 11, further comprising:

a hole formed in said upper housing; and

an actuator accessible by a user through said hole,

wherein when said user activates said actuator, said selectively connectable lead is electrically connected to said battery and said light source is activated.

21. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 20, further comprising raised protrusions disposed on an exterior of said upper housing substantially adjacent said hole for preventing inadvertent activation of said actuator.

22. An illuminated key blank according to Claim 20, at least one of said actuator and said casing comprising retaining holes and at least the other of said actuator and said casing comprising retaining pins matingly engageable with said retaining holes.

23. A set of readily identifiable illuminated keys, comprising:

a first key blank including:

a first main body having a first blade and a first head integral with said first blade as a single piece;

a first cutout formed in said first head;

a first battery disposed in said first cutout;

a first light source, selectively electrically connectable to said first battery via a first selectively connectable lead; and

a first casing of a first color sealed around said first head and said first battery,

wherein said first casing holds said first light source in place so as to shine light substantially in the direction of said first blade;

and

a second key blank including:

a second main body having a second blade and a second head integral with said second blade as a single piece;

a second cutout formed in said second head;

a second battery disposed in said second cutout;

a second light source, selectively electrically connectable to said second battery via a second selectively connectable lead; and

a second casing of a second color different from said first color sealed around said second head and said second battery,

wherein said second casing holds said second light source in place so as to shine light substantially in the direction of said second blade.

24. A set of keys according to Claim 23, wherein at least one of said first and second light sources shines light that is substantially the same color as its respective casing.

25. A set of keys according to Claim 23, wherein at least one of said first and second light sources shines light that is of a contrasting color as the color of its respective casing.

26. An illuminated key blank, comprising:

a main body having a blade and a head integral with said blade;

a casing sealed around said head;

a battery disposed in said casing; and

a light source disposed at least partially in said casing selectively electrically connectable to said battery; and

wherein said casing holds said light source in place so as to shine light substantially in the direction of said blade.

27. A set of readily identifiable illuminated keys, comprising:

a first key blank including:

a first main body having a first blade and a first head integral with said first blade;

a first casing of a first color sealed around said first head;  
a first battery disposed in said first casing; and  
a first light source disposed at least partially in said first casing and selectively electrically connectable to said first battery,  
wherein said first casing holds said first light source in place so as to shine light substantially in the direction of said first blade;  
and  
a second key blank including:  
a second main body having a second blade and a second head integral with said second blade;  
a second casing of a second color different from said first color sealed around said second head;  
a second battery disposed in said second casing; and  
a second light source disposed at least partially in said second casing selectively electrically connectable to said second battery;  
wherein said second casing holds said second light source in place so as to shine light substantially in the direction of said second blade.

28. An illuminated key blank, comprising:

a main key body having a blade;  
a casing sealed around a proximal portion of said key body;  
a battery disposed in said casing; and  
a light source disposed at least partially in said casing selectively electrically connectable

to said battery; and

wherein said casing holds said light source in place so as to shine light substantially in the direction of said blade.

29. A set of readily identifiable illuminated keys, comprising:

a first key blank including:

a first key body having a first blade;

a first casing of a first color sealed around a proximal portion of said first key body;

a first battery disposed in said first casing; and

a first light source disposed at least partially in said first casing and selectively electrically connectable to said first battery,

wherein said first casing holds said first light source in place so as to shine light substantially in the direction of said first blade;

and

a second key blank including:

a second key body having a second blade;

a second casing of a second color sealed around a proximal portion of said second key body;

a second battery disposed in said second casing; and

a second light source disposed at least partially in said second casing selectively electrically connectable to said second battery;

wherein said second casing holds said second light source in place so as to shine



light substantially in the direction of said second blade.